

CITY OF AUBURN PLUMBING BOARD  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2014 5:00 PM, MEMORIAL CITY HALL

Present: Frank Siracusa, William Orman, Greg Gallinger, Steve Bianco

Absent: none

Staff: Carl Castiglione, Plumbing Inspector; Brian Hicks, Sr. Code Enforcement Officer

Chair calls the meeting to order.

Chair asks for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2013 meeting. So moved by William Orman, seconded by Steve Bianco. All members vote approval. No members opposed. Motion carried.

Frank Siracusa: States that he has been informed by Brian Hicks the due to money issues meetings must be decreased to at least every other month, possibly quarterly.

Carl Castiglione: The new budget begins in July and changes may be made.

Steve Bianco: Asks if electricians require permits.

Carl Castiglione: More or less.

Steve Bianco: Asks where permit and licensing fees go and why they don't go to support the board.

Carl Castiglione: The board will be supported. Going to bi-monthly is the least we can do. The electrical board is being given the same option.

Steve Bianco: Questions special meetings.

Carl Castiglione: They will still be done as needed.

William Orman: Asks who asked/decided to decrease the meetings.

Carl Castiglione: Believes City Council.

Steve Bianco: They decide the cuts, Brian Hicks makes the decision of what gets cut.

William Orman: Support is billing four hours per meeting? Is it time compensation or hourly wage? We don't meet in the summer.

Frank Siracusa: We are off June, July and August.

William Orman: We compensate the secretary about \$360 per year. But we are bringing in fees for permits, licenses, etc. Ideas for new codes books, plumbing board account funds.

Greg Gallinger: Money available to get books into Codes office, no money for the board.

Frank Siracuse: Do we need to decide tonight?

Carl Castiglione: Yes. Bi-monthly is preferable. Also the sewer fund is depleted until July.

Steve Bianco: It has never depleted before. Tried to get for a customer and was unable.

Carl Castiglione: We should send a letter to plumbers to let them know.

William Orman: The idea being told there's not enough money to pay the secretary so cut back meetings does not sit well. Shouldn't agree to it as a board. Have had monthly meetings since inception. To let the City try to eliminate meeting times is a political play. The \$6,000 in fees, permits, etc. should more than cover. Money is generated by the plumbers. Would hurt not to have monthly meetings.

Carl Castiglione: We could invite the manager to sit in.

Steve Bianco: It isn't coming from the manager. Aren't there any other cuts that can be made?

Carl Castiglione: We are down to the bare minimum.

William Orman: Agreed. All departments have been asked to cut back.

Frank Siracuse: The secretary is the only one being paid. All others are volunteer.

Steve Bianco:

Carl Castiglione: No. There are increased complaints but the same cost and permits. Not an ideal solution.

Steve Bianco: Doesn't management see?

Carl Castiglione:

Joe D'Onofrio: Questions revenue for fines.

Carl Castiglione: They go into the Codes budget.

Joe D'Onofrio: HVAC do not get permits for gas?

Steve Bianco: That is a problem.

Carl Castiglione: They cannot run gas from the meter to the appliance.

William Orman: Violations are a problem in the City. It has improved but there's still a long way to go.

Joe D'Onofrio: Why is money not given to the board directly?

William Orman: It goes to the general Codes budget. Fines don't seem to faze the violators. \$500 is the maximum fine. They can be charged with a misdemeanor. Nervous about cutting back meetings. We are losing ground previously gained. Seems political, they want to get rid of licensing and permits altogether.

Joe D'Onofrio: Homeland Security set clean water as a number 1 priority, it is what we must protect.

Carl Castiglione: We can keep meeting during the summer instead of taking those months off.

Frank Siracusa: That would work out, and special meetings as needed.

Steve Bianco: We could compare fees to other cities of comparable size.

Joe D'Onofrio: Do not want to hit locals with larger fees but fees for big companies from out of the area could be raised.

William Orman: Bi-monthly all year would be the way to go.

Frank Siracusa: Is this satisfactory to everyone?

Carl Castiglione: Asked for a fee schedule from Ithaca. Suggests raising fees. Some residential but definitely commercial.

Frank Siracusa: Vote for bi-monthly, year round meetings. All in favor? Carried. Any changes will be notified by letter. Asks what the City Charter states about meetings.

Carl Castiglione: Will have to look up.

William Orman: It states how members are appointed, etc.

Steve Bianco: Questions the replacement of water meters and why an out of state company is doing it. Why weren't local plumbers notified?

Carl Castiglione: Talked with City Councilors, asked why members were being changed and why local contractor was not hired. The vote was 4 to 1 against this. There is nothing in the code books about water meters.

Steve Bianco: It's a connection.

Carl Castiglione: Called the company. Concerned they are not licensed. They don't do piping, just the meters only.

Steve Bianco: Questions the cost.

Carl Castiglione: Don't know exactly but it is costly.

William Orman: So new meters are going in? Is it costing the taxpayer? Is Davis Bacon invoked? Is it competitive bidding?

Frank Siracusa: It should have been but it was handed to this company.

Steve Bianco: Who made this decision?

Carl Castiglione: The company came in and sold the City a bill of goods stating it would save people money.

William Orman: So water fees decrease causing sewer fees to increase?

Steve Bianco: These are questions that need to be answered.

Carl Castiglione: Will invite Councilors to next meeting.

Frank Siracusa: Next meeting scheduled for March 11, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned.  
Recorded by Alicia McKeen